

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-12 DPW-01 AID-20 OMB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 CCO-00

INRE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 RSR-01 /129 W
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O P 091114 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9869

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY WARSAW PRIORITY

USDEL JEC PARIS

UNCLAS SAIGON 05965

E. O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: MARR VS

SUBJECT: CANDEL PRESS CONFERENCE AT SAIGON AIRPORT

1. CANDEL MAJOR GENERAL MCALPINE, UPON RETURN FROM HIS PARTICIPATION IN ICCS MILITARY COMMITTEE'S EFFORT TO ASSIST IN RETURN OF SURVIVORS AND REMAINS FROM TWO DOWNED ICCS HELICOPTERS IN QUANG TRI, HELD LATE AFTERNOON PRESS CONFERENCE AT TAN SON NHUT, MCALPINE STATED BOTH HELICOPTERS HAD BEEN HIT BY GROUND FIRE, STATING ONE HAD "PROBABLY" BEEN HIT BY SA-7 MISSILE WHICH CAUSED AIRCRAFT TO

EXPLODE, AND THAT SECOND HELICOPTER HAD BEEN DAMAGED BY GROUND FIRE BUT, AFTER STRENUOUS EVASIVE ACTION, SUCCEEDED IN LANDING AT SOME DISTANCE FROM CRASH SITE OF FIRST HELICOPTER. MCALPINE REPORTED FIRST CHOPPER HAD CRASHED IN EXTREMELY RUGGED TERRAIN ON MOUNTAIN SIDE, AND THAT SECOND HELICOPTER HAD BEEN DAMAGED TOO MUCH TO PERMIT TAKEOFF.

2. MCALPINE STATED SURVIVORS HAD SPENT NIGHT OF APRIL 7 IN SMALL HAMLET, AND DEPARTED AT 2100 HOURS APRIL 8 FOR GIO LINH,
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ARRIVING EARLY A. M. APRIL 9. HE STATED PRG HAD INSTRUCTED AIRCRAFT TO FLY AT 3,000 FT BUT HE WAS NOT AWARE OF ALTITUDE AT TIME OF SHOOTING. HE NOTED PRG IS CALLING INCIDENT " AN ACCIDENT", BUT HE STATED VERBAL ACCOUNTS OF SURVIVORS WILL DEMONSTRATE THAT THIS COULD NOT BE DESCRIBED AS AN ACCIDENT.

3. GENERAL MCALPINE REPORTED ONLY SEVEN OF NINE BODIES WERE RECOVERED, AND ONE OF MISSING BODIES IS BELIEVED TO BE AN HUNGARIAN. ROUGH TERRAIN AND POSSIBILITY BODIES WERE THROWN CLEAR MAY ACCOUNT FOR INABILITY TO LOCATE THESE TWO. HE REITERATED BOTH AIRCRAFT TOOK RATHER SUSTAINED AND RATHER ACCURATE GROUND FIRE. HE REPORTED THAT UPON ARRIVAL OF SURVIVORS AND REMAINS IN GIO LINH, A SOMEWHAT EXTENDED BARGAINING SESSION WAS REQUIRED TO OBTAIN RELEASE. THE PAPERS WHICH PRG REPS HAD PRESENTED FOR SIGNATURE TO ICCS IN ORDER TO EFFECT RELEASE, HE ADDED, INCLUDED MATERIAL WHICH NEITHER HE NOR INDODEL BRIG. GEN. WIDJOGO FELT THEY COULD SIGN. HE STATED NEITHER HE NOR INDODEL REP DID SIGN ANY DOCUMENTS WHICH THEY THOUGHT WERE " SUGGESTIVE" OF CERTAIN (UNIDENTIFIED) POINTS THE PRG WAS SEEKING TO ESTABLISH.

4. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, CANDEL STATED THERE COULD BE NO CONFUSION ON MARKINGS OF AIRCRAFT SINCE FLIGHT HAD BEEN APPROVED, AIRCRAFT CLEARLY MARKED, AND COMMUNIST FORCES CERTAINLY POSSESSED SUFFICIENT OPTICAL EQUIPMENT TO IDENTIFY AIRCRAFT. MCALPINE CONCLUDED, " THERE IS NO EXCUSE FOR VIOLATING AN ICCS AIRCRAFT." WHITEHOUSE

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*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED

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